

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
MAYOR'S TASK FORCE FOR THE FUTURE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Dave Ames, *Chairman*
James N. Richardson, Jr., *Vice Chairman*
Mark Baker
Tom Barnwell
Steve Birdwell
Marc Frey
Joe Harden
Peter Kristian
Elizabeth Lamkin



Gail Quick
Willis (Bud) Shay
David Tigges
Kumar Viswanathan

Non-Voting Members:
Drew Laughlin, Council
Liaison
Steve Riley, Town Manager

Minutes of the February 8, 2010 meeting

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Place: Benjamin M. Racusin Town Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present: Dave Ames, *Chairman*; James N. Richardson, Jr., *Vice Chairman*; Mark Baker; Tom Barnwell; Steve Birdwell; Marc Frey; Peter Kristian; Elizabeth Lamkin; Gail Quick; Bud Shay; David Tigges; Kumar Viswanathan; Joe Harden; *Committee Members*; Drew Laughlin, *Council Liaison*; Steve Riley, *Town Manager*.

Staff Present: Shawn Colin, *Senior Planner*; Sue Blake, *Executive Assistant to the Town Manager*.

Media Present: Laura Nahmias, *Island Packet*

I CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ames called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT COMPLIANCE

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

III APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Regular Committee meeting of January 25, 2010**

Peter Kristian moved to approve. Gail Quick seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- **Tourism Subcommittee**

Steve Birdwell reported that at their brainstorming session last Wednesday, twenty-three leaders from various tourism-related businesses as well as some private citizens participated. There was a very healthy and lively discussion on the challenges we faced in the tourism industry and good suggestions for the future. The committee was working on a summary of that report.

Mr. Birdwell reminded everyone about the presentation by Peter Yesawich followed by the informal discussion at the Chamber of Commerce on February 11.

The Tourism subcommittee was planning to meet with Susan Thomas of the Visitors & Convention Bureau at a date to be determined. But they felt they were nearly completed with the “discovery phase” of their assignment.

- **Retirement Subcommittee**

Bud Shay reported that at their last meeting, Frank Soule, Executive Director of the Island Recreation Association, spoke to them about his impression regarding senior services presently being provided by facilities such as the Island Rec Center as well as what he anticipated future needs might be. Frank Soule noted that approximately 20% of customers of the Rec Center are seniors. Frank Soule also talked about an island vacation he had taken where free transportation was provided. Mr. Shay mentioned that he felt the lack of transportation for seniors on Hilton Head Island was a serious problem.

At the next subcommittee meeting, they would be further refining the survey document. The survey will be in a multiple choice format so that the results could be tabulated. Once the survey was completed, the Manager of Hilton Head Plantation was going to distribute it via an email blast to the residents. This could prove to be a statistically accurate target market based on the fact that close to 70% of the residents were retirees. Once all the results were in, the subcommittee will review the survey for further refinement before submitting to the next group of potential respondents.

- **Business Subcommittee**

Kumar Viswanathan advised that at their last meeting they had an extended discussion to broadly define and summarize how to make the town more user-friendly to the business community and to create an atmosphere not only to retain existing businesses, but also to attract new business. They also want to identify and recruit new businesses that are in keeping with the core values of the Town. Lastly, a suggestion was made to bring some bankers in to a future meeting to speak about what they think the economy of the Island needs.

V NEW BUSINESS

- Elizabeth Lamkin collected data from the Task Force to further refine the SWOT analysis. She asked each member to select their top five priorities from each section and she tabulated the results. The top three winners per category were:
 - **Strengths**, 1. An Island, natural beauty, water, marshes, temperate climate; 2. People, educated, engaged, caring, giving; and 3. Brand, name recognition.
 - **Weaknesses**, 1. aging commercial buildings and condos; 2. Lack of coordinated, well-funded, differentiating marketing message; and 3. out of date LMO with incompatible DOT standards.

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- **Opportunities.** 1. Redevelopment to promote tourism & infuse jobs, create environment that will attract industry and business in keeping with Island values; 2. Create Town Center with extraordinary public spaces; and 3. re-write ordinances to foster redevelopment.
 - **Threats.** 1. Pollution of our waterways, deterioration of environment; 2. Loss of Hilton Head Island uniqueness, ambience, character, exclusivity and leadership; and 3. Inability to come together as a community to embrace and support a new vision for the future.

Ms. Lamkin said that they would continue to work on refining the SWOT analysis for the next meeting.

- Marc Frey talked about an article he read in the New York Times on the town of Santa Fe, NM and how that town re-invented itself to stay fresh and a desirable community to live and to visit.
- **Public Comment**
Joe Kopf addressed the committee to observe that in the Tourism category he felt that two areas of focus were missing: tennis and bicycling. He also felt that the lack of transportation for tourists was an issue.

Amanda O’Nan, the principal of the Hilton Head Island High School, talked about her passion for education and youth and how that was a major driver for the Island’s future. She introduced one of her students, Yurelli Vargas who said that she hoped that the task force would keep education of the Town’s youth on the forefront.

Joe Cunningham, who lives in Wexford, observed that even within his community the number of school-aged children had seen a significant increase.

The committee briefly discussed the impact young families will have on the economy of the Island and that what they do for young families will be critical.

VI ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m.